



## PAC Newsletter

Newsletter #2. I would appreciate some feedback if this is helpful to you or what other kinds of information you would find useful. If you want to receive this electronically, please let me know. It is my

intent that you may find the following information of interest and perhaps useful for discussion during Parent Advisory Committee meetings.

### **Education Week, March 1, 2000**

"Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley outlined a wide range of proposals last week in his seventh and final State of American Education speech. Among the highlights:

#### Raising Standards

Mr. Riley listed five principles that he said should guide states and districts as they implement rigorous academic standards:

- Have a healthy and ongoing dialogue with parents and teachers;
- Make sure that the standards are challenging, but realistic;
- Create quality assessments that have a direct connections to the standards;
- Invest wisely to improve teaching and learning; and
- Insist on real accountability for results.

#### Teacher Professionalism

Secretary Riley also stated that district's should find ways to keep teachers working for 11 months of the year, in return for more pay. The teachers could use the extra time to take part in professional development activities, meet with parents, and give students additional instruction.

#### Other Priorities from Secretary Riley

- The federal government should fund 40 percent of the extra costs associated with special education.
- Schools should form more partnerships with businesses.
- The nation should address the minority achievement gap and "digital divide" by providing more technology and mentors from high-tech fields to needy schools.
- Mentors should help disadvantaged high school students enter and stay in college.
- High education leaders should work with K-12 schools to reform teacher education and look for new ways to train teachers.
- Schools should use character education to help students develop a 'moral compass'."

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When kids do a lot for other people, there's something you can do for them. Reward students who are serving their communities by sponsoring the President's Student Service Challenge in your school. Students in kindergarten through college who serve 100 hours will receive a certificate, pin, and letter of appreciation from the President. And two outstanding students from the junior or senior class may receive a \$1,000 scholarship for college. Take part in the President's Student Service Challenge.

888-275-5018 [www.student-service-awards.org](http://www.student-service-awards.org)

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*I include this story because situations are not always black and white. We all make decisions based on the best information at the time. Place yourself in this educators place and think about what you would have done. Do you think that there was any win decision here?*

#### **Education Week, March 1, 2000**

"A Spanish teacher at a Chicago high school has been disciplined for leaving a student in Spain at the conclusion of a three-week exchange trip last month.

A teacher at Morgan Park High School, was reassigned for three days last month to a nonteaching job at the 2,200 student school after her decision to leave a 16 year old student behind.

When the student lost his passport, the teacher arranged for a chaperone to assist him in securing a replacement in Madrid while she and 18 other students returned to Chicago as scheduled on February 12. The student arrived home three days later.

The chief executive officer of the Chicago public schools, released the district's investigative findings stating that both the teacher and principal were responsible for placing the student at risk.'

The teacher was allowed to resume her 26 year teaching career on Feb. 22."

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#### **Education Week, March, 15,2000**

**CBS Slammed:** The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is again criticizing CBS's "60 Minutes", calling its recent report on violent special education students an "inaccurate portrayal."

The news magazine show ran a segment on March 5 that spotlighted Lance Landers, an emotionally and behaviorally disturbed 16-year-old in Gulf Shores, Alabama.

A state court approved the Baldwin County District Attorney's request to have the boy barred from all public schools in Alabama because of his violent behavior. In a letter to Don Hewitt, the show's executive producer, CEC Executive Director Nancy D. Safer wrote that the report left viewers with the impression that students with disabilities are responsible for school violence.

"In fact, not one special education student has been involved in any of the terrible shootings that have plagued our nation," she wrote in the March 6 letter. "Furthermore, data show that students with disabilities are more likely to be the victims of violence than the perpetrators."

Three years ago, the CEC and other advocacy groups for students also protested a "60 Minutes" report on the costs of special education services that aired during the reauthorization of IDEA. Kevin Tedesco, a spokesman for CBS, said the network receives hundreds of letters each week and forwards them to the producers of the stories in question. Unless evidence of an egregious error is presented it is unlikely that any action will be taken.

*Did any of you see this show? What do you think? What ideas could we come up with for a show segment that would portray our students in a more positive light? Wouldn't that be exciting?*

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What have you heard within your districts about the price of fuel? I have read that this has caused some budget issues because of the increased cost of keeping school buses on the road. Ask is this is an issue in your area and how this potentially costly issue is being handled. I include this because as a parent, I have not always thought about funding issues like this where the costs vary from year to year (and in this situation weekly) are handled. How does a district figure out and project what costs will be for a year in advance?

Always happy to hear from you. Let me know how your PAC is doing.

As this school year draws to a close soon, I would like to ask you to think about what went well and to let me know. I would like to include some articles about teachers/schools who are doing wonderful work. I know we have many wonderful teachers. I have included a short form you could use or just send me a short clip I can include some stories in newsletters next fall. Tell me about what is working well. Let's get better at sharing the joys that our children and schools bring into our lives. Our successes should be celebrated often

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This information is in no way endorsed by the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services or your respective Intermediate or Local School District.